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ABSTRACT

One of the main problems facing andragogy is that its systematic nature is more the result of other theoretical deliberations than those of its own. Until the mid-19th century, andragogy founded its development mainly on prevailing communal, social, economic, political, and cultural conditions in various countries. In the 1950s, andragogy turned increasingly into a science whose goals were directed toward humans and their relationship to the world in which practice is only the result of human's "spiritual praxis." Andragogy must now deal with the theoretical organization of its theory, historically perceive its achievements thus far, and become connected with other sciences to accelerate its own development and simultaneously acquire an identity of its own and an internal coherence as a science. Different individuals still have very different understandings of andragogy. Some consider andragogy a pedagogic discipline, whereas others consider it a relatively autonomous science within the framework of the general sciences of teaching and learning. Yet others consider andragogy a method, skill, theory, or model of adult learning. The starting point of andragogy as an independent science of adult education within the concept of lifelong learning is no longer disputable. Andragogy's autonomy as a science of adult education must now be considered. (10 references) (MN)

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ANDRAGOGY BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

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ANDRAGOGY BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION

Andragogy is a relatively young science that developed its systematic structure in close connection with other sciences such as philosophy, pegagogy, logic and sociology and precisely for this reason its systematic structure is more the result of other theoretical deliberations than those of its own. Herein lies one of the main problems of andragogy as a science and its theoretical establishment.

Up to the middle of the 19th century, when the first systematic theoretical deliberations on the education and learning of adults began to appear, andragogy mainly founded its development on the practice up to that time that was actually a manifestation of the current socio-economic and socio-cultural needs of the class society. On such pragmatic foundations it almost completely renounced considerations of creating a fundamental theory. Its major theoretical research was pragmatically targeted exclusively on deliberation and study of problems regarding the process of learning with one and only objective: the realization of practice as successfully as possible. This kind of pragmatic trend of andragogy was the cause of comprehensions of andragogy as a predominantly pragmatic science, thereby also the main party to blame for the "delayed" systematic development of andragogic theory itself. The only theoretical cognitions referred to "many beneficial applicative cognitions in the domain of didactics and methodology (forms, methods, means, organization, evaluation, etc.)" (I. Mrmak, 1990. p. 70) that were very often in contradiction, did not aim towards a deeper theoretical enlightenment and its theoretical basis could be ascribed to positivism, behaviorism and pragmatism.

"Andragogy was constituted in a period when the ancient and renaissance humanistic enlightenment paradigm of science was already outweighed by the new positivistic paradigm. The ancient and humanistic-renaissance outlook on the development of science started from pure theory, also taking into consideration the reflection on reality as well as the conceptual and semantic generalizations of experiencing reality, but in the first place in order to create a conceptual world that would best reveal its patterns on a level of generalizations." (I. Mrmak, 1990, p. 71)

The positivistic paradigm of science is based on the natural sciences and study of the links of cause-and-effect, therefore they brought about the neglect of upbringing tendencies in favor of educational. A mechanical approach to man lie at the nucleus of the new paradigm: man-means-praxis, and since andragogy was unencumbered by the old paradigm of humanistic-enlightenment and was constituted in the period of domination of the new paradigm, its disinterestedness in the development of its own fundamental theory was not unusual.

This andragogic orientation began to change to a greater degree during the 1950's.

Andragogy turned more and more into a science and its goals are directed towards man and his relationship to the world in which practice is only the result of his "spiritual praxis". With the new era of information science a new paradigm of science is developing. It is setting up new demands before andragogy, which carries within itself elements of both the paradigm of humanistic-enlightenment and of positivism. The new paradigm of science requests of andragogy to contribute to the comprehension of man's purpose and discovery of the ways and forms of development of his potentials and orientation towards the future and openness towards the future.

"It is becoming ever more obvious that the primary assignment of pedagogy and andragogy is not the study of learning for the existing reality but rather the study for creating future realities. Their primary assignment is not to study how to most rationally satisfy current needs, but rather, starting from present-day achievements (scientific, technical, man's awareness of his own purpose), how best and most rationally to form man to create and develop new visions, in conformity with man's humanistic concept, ideas that stem from his own essence and his own characteristics." (I. Mrmak, 1990, p. 75)

Andragogy must deal with the theoretical organization of its theory, historically perceive it achievements thus far, making use of already existing concepts, making them meaningful and testing them. "Developing concepts of spreading fundamental knowledge and contemplative abilities to adults, as well as theories that place such training into the function of development of meaning, is presently becoming increasingly indispensable. In the process, of particular significance are theories for creating individual systems of valuation and criteria for evaluating values, in other words visions on which they are founded." (I. Mrmak, 1990, p. 77)

In the development of these concepts it is necessary to connect andragogy with other sciences in order to accelerate its own development and at the same time enlighten the

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roads to acquiring an identity of its own and an internal coherency as a science of the future and a science for the future.

2. ANDRAGOGY'S PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

In the practical and theoretical basis of andragogy as an autonomous science one can identify various phases that reflected certain states of theoretical thought and andragogic practice. Various authors (Ogrizović, Pongrac, Savičević, Krajnc, Jelenc, Poggeler, and others) most often mention the following phases:

1. phase of integral unity of andragogy with pedagogy and sociology;
2. phase of descriptive-deductive andragogy;
3. phase of relative autonomy of andragogy as a science.

The characteristic of the first phase is a unity of pedagogic and andragogic practice. This period began as far back as in ancient Greece and lasted up till the 19th century, until the industrial-technical revolution. Andragogic thought appears as a part of general philosophic and pedagogic thought. In the works of great thinkers, from the sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, renaissance thinkers, via the French thinkers of the Enlightenment, the encyclopedic materialists to the Russian revolutionary democrats, andragogic ideas had a prominent position. Although these thoughts and ideas never went beyond emphasizing the general principles of people's enlightenment, they represent a precious component of the andragogic science of today.

The descriptive-deductive phase in the development of andragogy began in the second half of the 19th century when andragogic practice gradually distinguished itself from the pedagogic and this lasted up to the 1930's. The needs of labor and social life made adult learning reach a high degree of development and this was especially manifested by the adult education schools movement and movement of extension universities. Besides description of andragogic practice they endeavored to shed light upon numerous theoretical issues such as e.g. the possibilities and limits of adult learning, adult learning and society, basic andragogic principles, modes and methods of working with adults... This phase was of great importance for the emergence and evolution of andragogic science since it marks the first attempts in the history of adult education to apply general pedagogic and sociologic principles in the domain of andragogy.

The last, third phase in the development of andragogy consists of its relative scientific autonomy. This occurs during the period between the two world wars, and particularly in the postwar period. This phase is increasingly characterized by empirical research, in which the experiment is also given an appropriate place. Numerous theoretical works appeared dealing with various issues of andragogic theory and practice analyzed from the sociological, psychological, andragogical-philosophical and didactical-methodical and other aspects. Besides this, light is shed on numerous problems of andragogic theory and practice with the objective of making guidance and adult learning a general social activity that is scientifically founded.

The development of andragogy is a methodologal and cognitive sense gradually brought about its scientific constitution and relatively high degree of development. But in spite of this, very diverse comprehensions of andragogy still exist:

1. andragogy is a pedagogic disciplie;
2. andragogy is a relatively autonomous science within the framework of the general science of teaching and educating;
3. andragogy is a method, skill, theory or model of adult learning.

The opinion that andragogy is just one of the pedagogic disciplines starts from the premise that pedagogy is an integral science of teaching and educating, in other words pedagogy "covers" the phenomenon of teaching and educating hence andragogy outside of pedagogy as a science of teaching and educating cannot contend to debate the well-foundedness of its subject matter and methodology. Although such a concept of andragogy as a pedagogic discipline does not deny the specificity of the domain of adult learning that needs to be theoretically contemplated and empirically explored, it holds that the points of departure for regularity of the process of adult learning should be looked for in the pedagogical patterns of the training and education process. Moreover, theoretical thematic treatment and empirical reflections in andragogy are derived from pedagogical-scholastic, psychological-scholastic, didactical-methodical, school system patterns of development of the educational process. This orientation mainly directs the domain of andragogy to issues of adult learning or even more narrowly to the issues of learning and teaching of adults in the context of the complexities of those processes, organizations and modes of execution. The consequences of such an outlook on andragogy as a pedagogical discipline, in spite of its contribution to theorizing significant issues and problems of adult learning and expanding practice in that domain, left andragogy in the "shadow" of pedagogical science as an "applied pedagogical discipline" that for the most part deals with the technology and organization of adult education. Although even today we come upon comprehension of andragogy as a pedagogic discipline in discussions regarding the epistemics and the well-foundedness of its subject matter and methodology both here and abroad, this is sometimes more implicitly than explicitly stated and one must nevertheless say that this viewpoint has been abandoned.

Today the starting point of andragogy as an independent science of adult education within the concept of lifelong learning is no longer disputable. The starting points that are becoming questionable are philosophical and theoretical, the subject matter area,

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the well-foundedness of methodological suppositions that would represent the basis for constituting the "teleology", "logos" and "praxis" of adult education. In the concept of lifelong learning the theoretical subject matter and practice of adult education is oriented on the subject of (dis)functionalizing, abolishing manipulation and freeing adults in the process of learning as an unfinished continuity. In that sense the proclamation of the autonomy of andragogy regardless of the basis and justifiability of such autonomy does not suffice without a developed corpus of andragogic theory, theorizing of its praxis and educational technology. In these endeavors the autonomy of andragogy or, even in a wider sense, the science of adult education, in which the syntagm "adult education" acquires individual and anthropological as well as social and humanistic characteristics, should be perceived through the multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary features of its subject, its methodological and epistemic levels, and not through the shutting off of andragogy in relation to other sciences, particularly those whose aspects are contiguous with the phenomenon of adult learning. Such consideration of the autonomy of andragogy as a science of adult education should not be the cause of fear that it might bring about the dispersion of andragogic science as a "conglomeration" of diverse sciences that are in touch with the phenomenon of adult education or that andragogy will thereby become an "eclectic science" of adult learning and will in that way lose its autonomy. On the contrary, the epistemological and subjective-methodological setting up of andragogy, the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary grounds of the phenomenon of adult education are the point of departure and condition for legitimizing andragogy as a science of the phenomenon of adult education.

Fragmentation of the approach to defining andragogy as a method, skill or mode of adult education in which there is an effort "to cover up" the problems of adult learning with very complex comprehensions regarding methods and technologies of learning, strategies and procedures or various models or modalities that are theoretically conceived and practically founded, are nowhere near to finding an answer to the philosophical, theoretical and practical phenomenon of adult education in the concept of lifelong learning of a kind of new philosophy and necessity in practicing adult education.

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ANDRAGOGY BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Andragogy is a fairly new science. Although it has a very long and rich andragogical practice, as a theory its systematic development only began in the 19th century. The second half of the 20th century is looked upon as the period of its most fruitful and most intensive development in which andragogy became a relatively independent scientific discipline.

From a historical standpoint, the development of andragogical theory and practice progressed diversely and was always closely linked to prevailing communal, social, economical, political and cultural conditions in various countries. That is precisely why there is the emergence of diverse theoretical concepts of andragogy, both of the traditional ones that appeared in the pre-industrial era, as well as those appearing with the growth of industry and capitalism, as well as with the modern andragogical concepts that emerged after World War II, and whose diverse modes of development we are able to follow to this very day. In the development of these concepts andragogy must of necessity be connected with other sciences in order to enhance its development and thereby enlighten the roads to acquiring an identity of its own and an internal coherency as a science of the future and a science for the future.

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